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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 002591

SIPDIS

NSC FOR C. BARTON
HQ SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2013

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SUBJECT: COVERING VENEZUELA'S RECALL REFERENDUM

Classified By: Political Counselor Abelardo A. Arias for reason 1.4 (d)

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11. (C) Embassy Caracas will field informal observers to cover the presidential recall referendum August 15 in and around the capital, Maracaibo and Puerto LaCruz as well as Carabobo and Aragua States. Lacking National Electoral Council credentials for access to voting centers, our observers will seek to obtain information indirectly through conversations with local political leaders and accredited observers if the opportunity arises. They will also provide a first hand, on-the-street perspective of the voting.

12. (SBU) As of 0800 local on August 15, Embassy watch will commence in Political Section. After an initial e-mail report on overnight developments and the opening of the voting day, we will transmit reporting cable at mid-day. Other cable and e-mail reports as necessary will follow during the day. (Voting is scheduled to begin at 6:00 a.m. and concludes at 4:00 p.m. or when the last person in line votes. CNE President Francisco Carrasquero told reporters August 10 the CNE plans to have the first results a few hours after polls close.)

13. (SBU) Additionally, Embassy will be supporting Codel Weller which arrives the afternoon of August 14, and the visit of former President Jimmy Carter, who arrives August 13. We have asked for CNE credentials for all Codel Weller members to be official observers. (Two of the five congressmen already have CNE invitations to be observers). Ambassador and DCM will accompany the Codel as they visit voting centers in Caracas, should the CNE extend the invitations as requested.
Shapiro

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